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This study assesses the social intelligence component using the Friendship Rating Scale. In a cohesive fifth grade class, peer acceptance was found to covary with academic achievement at the same magnitude that such achievement related with measured intelligence. Self ratings were not as efficient as peer ratings in the prediction of academic success. (Author/EK)

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SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE, ACHIEVEMENT, AND THE ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL CHILD

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Abstract

Using a measure of social intelligence with a cohesive class of fifth graders, peer acceptance was found to covary with academic achievement at the same magnitude that such achievement related with measured intelligence. Self ratings were not as efficient as peer ratings in the prediction of academic achievement.

One of the classical questions in education centers around the chicken-egg dilemma, "Do children do well academically because they are socially admired by their peers; or, are they admired because they do well?" Elements of this exercise involve investigating the degrees of inter-relationship among peer evaluations, self evaluations, academic aptitude and academic achievement. These would be aspects of the main question.

E. L. Thorndike (1939) sensed that there were three categories of intelligence. "(a) abstract or verbal intelligence, involving facility in the use of symbols; (b) practical intelligence, involving facility in manipulating objects; (c) social intelligence, involving facility in dealing with human beings." It stands to reason, i.e., we need proof, that all of these components contribute to being able to deal effectively with one's environment.

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The new Dictionary of Occupational Titles, with its data-things-people trinity (abstract-practical-social), seems to assume so.

The typical perception of academic aptitude as being abstract or verbal intelligence is too limiting. Wechsler (1950), speaking of Bergson's claim that "...human intelligence, as the psychologist conceives it, can only deal with geometric and logical symbols," reacts:

> Now the remarkable thing is that while this is what we are saying in our tests of intelligence, most of us don't believe it. What is more important, it isn't true! Our contemporary definitions of intelligence assert as much: intelligence according to these is not only the ability to learn, to abstract, to profit from experience, but also to adjust and achieve. Everyone with clinical experience knows that the latter involve other capacities besides educative, verbal, numerical, spatial, and the other intellective factors that have been demonstrated. Yes, but what are they? The answer is: they are not intellective.

This study was designed to assess aspects of the social intelligence component through the vehicle of The Friendship Rating Scale (FRS).* This instrument was administered originally by Hall and Gaeddert (1960) to University of Nebraska fraternities and sororities--close-knit groups formed from people that live together by common choice. That scale with those groups resulted in equal or higher relationships with grade-point-average (GPA) than were obtained by correlating GPA with conventional measures of intelligence.

Could this sociometric technique be used with other populations? A fifth-grade, Roman Catholic, class of 36 pupils was

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* Courtesy of Dr. William E. Hall, Department of Educational Psychology and Measurements, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

selected.** Most of these youngsters had been in the same class for five years, and all had been together for eight months. Their play periods (recess and P.E.), moreover, were scheduled separately from the other classes. Compared with other possible class sections at the elementary level, these youngsters had greater opportunity to know each other and to share a relatively common frame of reference for social judgments. Ratings by strangers were avoided. The same observations could be made about the college groups of Hall and Gaedert. No racial minority-group members were represented in either sample.

Prior to administering the device to the fifth graders, they were assured that this was not a "test," that the results were confidential, and that the term "he" represents either boys or girls. They also received group and individual instruction about the rating processes. Once they had started the actual rating sequences, no questions were asked.

Administration:

Each child was given three sheets of paper--each page a different color. Page one, given below, contained the instructions, the rating scale, and the five descriptions to be used for the ratings. Every pupil rated every classmate without exception--the second direction below was not needed for this group.

** Courtesy of Mary K. Sullivan, Reno, Nevada, who contributed greatly to this study.

INSTRUCTIONS

Rate every member of your class on each of the five statements printed on the bottom of this page. Look at these statements as often as you wish. Work as rapidly as possible--your first idea as to the proper rating for any one person is probably the best one.

Rate every person. If you feel that you do not know a boy or girl well enough to give the proper rating, make a guess anyway, then draw a circle around the rating.

Draw a line through your own name. Don't rate yourself by your name but on the special space on another page.

Rate every boy and girl by giving them a number for each of the five items. The numbers you will use will be from 1 to 5. The number you give will mean the following:

5 (This is the highest possible rating)

4 (Above average)

3 (This is an average rating so should be used the most)

2 (Below average)

1 (This is the lowest possible rating)

GO DOWN THE COLUMNS RATHER THAN ACROSS THE ROWS.

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DESCRIPTIONS

I HE FITS THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION: "VERY CHEERFUL AND HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR. ALWAYS TRIES TO HELP SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE TROUBLE. IS HONEST AND OTHERS TRUST HIM. OTHER PEOPLE LIKE HIM AND TRY TO BE WITH HIM.

II HE IS A PERSON WITH WHOM I WOULD LIKE TO TALK OVER MY PERSONAL AFFAIRS AND SECRETS.

III HE GREETS OTHER PEOPLE WHEN HE SEES THEM.

IV I CONSIDER HIM TO BE ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS.

V HE IS A PERSON WHOM I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AS PRESIDENT OF OUR CLASS OR ANY OTHER GROUP IN WHICH I AM ACTIVE.

Page two, legal sized with names double-spaced for ease of reading, contained each pupil's full name. The class roster was in alphabetical order for half the sets, and in reverse alphabetical order for the other half. Pupils with the same first names or similar last names were separated on the rosters to avoid confusion. The fifth graders were directed first to cross out their own name, and the, referring to the INSTRUCTIONS sheet as often as desired, to complete Column I entirely before going on to Column II. The entire class was kept in phase through Column III and then allowed to work at their own speed. The entire process, including page three, took 30 minutes. Page two was structured as follows:

NAME OF STUDENT	I	II	III	IV	V
John Able					
Mary Zebra					

Page three, used for self ratings and the listing of friends or desired friends, was set up as below:

LIST THREE STUDENTS PRESENTLY IN THIS SCHOOL WHOM YOU WOULD LIKE MOST TO HAVE AS FRIENDS. THEY MAY BE EITHER BOYS OR GIRLS. THEY MAY BE IN YOUR CLASS OR ANOTHER CLASS. THEY MAY BE YOUR FRIENDS NOW OR PERSONS WHOM YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AS FRIENDS.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

****

RATING MYSELF

I ☐ II ☐ III ☐ IV ☐ V ☐

In rating yourself on IV, ask yourself: "Do others choose me as a best friend?"

Statistical Results:

Correlation (rho) Matrix

		I	II	III	IV
I	Friendship Rating Scale:	--	.79	.66	.57
II	Grade Point Average:		--	.77	.54
III	Intelligence Quotient:			--	.24
IV	Self Rating, FRS:				--

Relationships:

With this admittedly, and so designed, socially-similar class of 36 fifth-grade, parochial school, middle-class pupils, the measure of social intelligence was as precise and efficient as was a measure of academic aptitude in relating with academic achievement. With the pupils in a rank-order array, the perceptive teacher can gain insights into the social structure of his class and assess the degree to which individual pupils are peer- and self-supported or rejected. The Friendship Rating Scale with this group could have had a range of 175 to 875 points (5 points x 35 pupils and 25 x 35). The observed range was from 292 to 752, with a mean of 490.5 and a median of 474.

Self ratings, a more limited range of 5 to 25 points, were found to be about half as efficient (in terms of the percentage of variance explained) as peer ratings in relating to obtained GPA. Self ratings are much more in phase with peer ratings and GPA than self ratings are with measures of intelligence.

Other Findings:

Of the 21 girls and 15 boys comprising this class, boys garnered the top three places on the FRS; however, 7 of the boys, nearly half,

were placed in the lowest quartile-rank.

Eighty-five "best friend" choices were made within this class from a possible 108 choices (3 x 36) made altogether. Of these 85, 56 per cent of the choices went to those pupils in the 4th (highest) quartile-rank on the FRS. The third and second quartile-ranks each received 17 per cent of the "best friend" choices, and the first (lowest) quartile-rank obtained 10 per cent of these choices. Of course, these data at the individual pupil level are of great value to the teacher and counselor.

Discussion:

Social understandings, skills and growth are values to be found in most listings of goals for education. This instrument has a place in the assessment of the degree to which such goals are being achieved for individual pupils. The direct teaching and free discussion of the values inherent within the five items of the FRS might be as appropriate for the rounded education of the pupil as any element of the symbolic systems within our curriculum. To the optimistic reader, we realize that we have not answered the main question. The relationships appear to be symbiotic.

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